

REMARKS

The specification and drawings are being amended to address minor informalities and to conform them to each other. Similarly, the examiner's objections to claims 1 and 2 are addressed.

Claims 1 and 2 are currently being amended and claims 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are being added. Hence, claims 1-8 are now pending in this application.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C §102(b) as anticipated by Fukushima; dependent claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under §103(a) as obvious over Fukushima in view of Bernardini. In response, applicants traverse the rejections.

Claim 1 has been amended to change "contact member" to --touch ring--. Preferred embodiments of applicants' touch ring 30 and touch ring mounting section 20a are described, e.g., on page 4 lines 6 to 11 and page 5 lines 1 to 24 in the original specification. Applicants respectfully submit that there is a difference in shape and effect between the touch ring as required by claim 1 and contact band 15 of Fukushima.

For example, one aspect of touch ring 30 is described on page 5, lines 12 to 14 of the specification: "touch ring 30 always obtains stable electrical characteristics because the contact pin 20 is always in contact with the tube 10." The operation and effect of a preferred embodiment of the invention is described on page 7, lines 9 to 19 of the specification. Applicants respectfully maintain that, with touch ring 30, it is possible to shorten the length of the tube and better enable miniturization than with Fukushima's connector.

Moreover, applicants submit that newly added claims 4-8 recite features not taught or suggested by Fukushima, either alone or in combination with Bernardini.

Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 15 April 2004

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP  
Customer Number: 22428  
Telephone: (202) 672-5413  
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By George E. Quillin

George E. Quillin  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 32,792